6/6/70

Dear Dick,

With a little bit of time to myself now, I respond to your 6/1.

Nichols 399 base: I have compared this with Harold's photo and, while I too am dubious that any alteration has yet occured, I do not discount the possibility that something has been done to the "ridge" between the two pix. It involves a very small area, the "notch" which I recalled when I originally saw Nichols' photo. By the way, what does this new photo do in relation to your previous analysis of 399 with the gunpowder flecks? Does it reinforce it or vitiate it?

00-buckshot: I think you misunderstand the way in which I wish to make the analogy to the JFK case. It would not be a physical analogy but rather a circumstantial one. I would write something like this:

"On (such and such a day) 6 men were shot and killed by police XX during riots in Georgia. These men were all immediately brought to nearby hospitals at which three of the men were observed by hospital physicians. These physicians, seeing only the front of the shot men, noticed bullet wounds of the chest which they described as "penetrating" in written reports and subsequently referred to as "entrance" wounds--meaning that the men had been fired upon by someone in front of them. The coroner, claiming to have performed autopsies on these men, stated that they were, in fact, fired upon from the rear and that the wounds anteriorly were exit wounds. Controversy raged in which neither party was willing to admit error. Finally, the coroner revealed that he had not performed complete autopsies, only gross examinations. Complete autopsies were then performed on these men at which time it was conclusivley dtermined that they had really been shot from behind.

"On 11/22/63 the President of the United States was shot and killed by sniper(s) in Dallas. He was immediately brought to a nearby Hosptital at which he was observed by several physicians. These physicians, seeing only the front of the President's body, noticed a bullet wound of the neck which some described in written reports as "penetrating" and subsequently referred to as an "entrance" wound. Patholgists who claimed to have done an autopsy on the President stated that he was, in fact, shot from the back and that the wound anteriorly was one of exit. Controversy raged, in which the Dallas physicians conceeded that, since their examination did not take into account other wounds, the front wound "could" conditionally have been one of exit. XX Subsequent investigation revealed that a complete autopsy was not performed by the patholgists and there is no record that the conclusive tests to determine the nature of the front wound were ever performed. The time element involved ruled out the possibility for another autopsy."

The comparison centers around the clarifying effect of an autopsy and its potential to dispell controversy. It merely points up what was not done in the case of a President's murder and, to a certain extent, what has stemmed from failure to do a proper autopsy.

Book: Your words on my book are encouraging.

Letter to Rhodes and Slides: You are right that 399 was

mounted in some material. Frazier testified that this material left a stain on the nose. However, I believe my questions to Rhodes involved only that period in which the Archives had possession of 399. I must add another question--Was 399 base ever photographed before fragment fell from it?

I have a reason for asking this, and will, in fact, address a more detailed request to Eckhoff. I was just listening to my Tink-Specter debate which I am copying for Lifton. Tink was showing slides. He came to ones of 399 and said, "Now, here are some close-ups of 399. Here's the base, and here's the nose." It was obvious that he was referring to two different slides, i.e. one which showed base and one of nose.

The things is that if Tink had these pix taken with the rest of his, then the one of the base might show it before it lost the fragment. So, knowing that he does have a base photo, I will write Eckhoff for a copy and the date on which it was taken.

As for the tan residues on my slide, haven't you ever seen a bullet which went through a target and then into sand or a mound of dirt? It gets a tan residue on it which, in some places, is hard to remove. I note a similarity on the 399 base to this type of residue but assert nothing positive about it.

Must go now.

Best,

cc. Harold